

REMARKS

Claims 1-38 and 43-51 are now in the application, claims 39-42 having been cancelled in this paper. Claims 1-38 and 43-51 are rejected. Claims 43-47 are amended by this paper. In particular, claims 43-46 have been amended to place those claims in the same format as claims that were considered in In re Beauregard, 35 U.S.P.Q.2d 1383 (CAFC 1995) to satisfy 35 USC §101. Claim 47 has been amended to correct a minor informality therein. No new matter is believed added by these amendments.

A. Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 1-38 and 43-51 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over an asserted combination of the Friedland and McGovern references.

Claim 1 is directed to a "method of decentralized e-commerce", including "receiving a search request from a user to search content stored on at least one content server". The content "includes provider tags identifying each of at least one content field within the content." The search request "includes at least one search term associated with at least one portal tag". The portal tag is "part of a portal tagging standard and identif[ies] a type of data within content to be searched". The method recited in claim 1 further includes "identifying the provider tag corresponding to the portal tag using a cross-reference of portal tags corresponding to provider tags" and "comparing the search term with a content field tagged with a provider tag corresponding to the portal tag associated with the search term."

The Friedland reference is concerned with a "distributed live auction" implemented via the Internet. The McGovern reference is concerned with an interactive computer-based employment recruiting service. It is respectfully submitted that neither of these references is particularly pertinent to the present invention, which is generally concerned with improving handling of content search requests.

Moreover, there are several features recited in claim 1 which are not disclosed in the Friedland and McGovern references and are not suggested by the references even

if their teachings could be meaningfully combined. For example, nothing in either of the references teaches or suggests receiving a search request that includes at least one search term associated with a portal tag. Indeed, both references are silent as to portal tags.

Furthermore, neither reference teaches or suggests "identifying the provider tag corresponding to the portal tag". The concept of a provider tag is entirely absent from the two references, as is the concept of a portal tag. Thus identifying a provider tag corresponding to a portal tag is also clearly lacking in the references.

Still further, both references also clearly lack the claimed feature of "comparing the search term with a content field tagged with a provider tag corresponding to the portal tag associated with the search term".

It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 1 is clearly patentable over the combination of references cited against that claim.

Claims 20 and 47 are apparatus claims that are parallel to claim 1, and claim 43 is an article of manufacture claim that is parallel to claim 1. The remarks made above in regard to claim 1 are generally applicable to claims 20, 43 and 47, which are submitted as patentable on the same basis as claim 1.

Claim 13 is directed to a "method of decentralized e-commerce" including "generating an index of decentralized content having a record for each of at least one provider's content". Each record "includes at least one data field identified by a portal tag". The data field contains "at least a portion of content from a content field identified by a provider tag corresponding to the portal tag". The provider tag corresponding to the portal tag is "identified using key information". The method recited in claim 13 also includes "receiving a search request from a user to search the index". The search request "includes at least one search term associated with at least one portal tag". The method of claim 13 further includes "comparing the search terms having associated portal tags with the portion of content stored in the data field identified by the same portal tag."

As in the case of claim 1, it is believed that claim 13 recites several features not present in the references relied upon by the Examiner, whether taken alone or in combination. For example, neither reference discloses "generating an index". The

references also fail to teach or suggest an index record having a data field containing content from a content field identified by a provider tag corresponding to a portal tag. As noted above, the two references relied upon by the Examiner are completely silent as to portal tags, provider tags, and provider tags that correspond to portal tags.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 13 is patentable over the references relied upon by the Examiner.

Claims 32 and 48 are apparatus claims that are parallel to claim 13, and claim 44 is an article of manufacture claim that is parallel to claim 13. The remarks made above in regard to claim 13 are generally applicable to claims 32, 44 and 48, which are submitted as patentable on the same basis as claim 13.

Claim 17 is directed to a "method of decentralized e-commerce" including "registering a content provider". The registering of the content provider includes "receiving key information and an address to content". The content is "tagged with at least one provider tag to identify each of at least one content field". The content is "stored on a content server" and the key information is "a cross-reference of each provider tag corresponding to each portal tag". The claimed method also includes "providing a user search interface permitting a user to enter a search request for content". The user search interface "permits a user to associate a portal tag with each search term whereby restricting the search to at least one of the content fields". The method of claim 17 further includes "receiving the search request from a user", "searching the content based on the search request", "identifying content complying with the user's search request", and "transmitting the identified content to the user".

Again it is submitted that the references relied upon by the Examiner fail to disclose several features recited in claim 17, including receiving key information that is "a cross-reference of each provider tag corresponding to each portal tag". There is also no disclosure in the Friedland and McGovern references of a user search interface that "permits a user to associate a portal tag with each search term".

It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 17 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 36 and 49 are apparatus claims that are parallel to claim 17, and claim 45 is an article of manufacture claim that is parallel to claim 17. The remarks made above

in regard to claim 17 are generally applicable to claims 36, 45 and 49, which are submitted as patentable on the same basis as claim 17.

Claim 18 is directed to a "method of decentralized e-commerce" which includes "creating content wherein the content is tagged with at least one provider tag to identify each of at least one content field", "storing the content on a content server", and "registering the content with a portal server". The registering of the content with a portal server is recited to include "providing an address for the content" and "providing key information relating a provider tag to a corresponding portal tag in a portal tagging standard".

It is respectfully noted that the references relied upon by the Examiner, whether taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the feature of "providing key information relating a provider tag to a corresponding portal tag". It is therefore respectfully submitted that the rejection of claim 18 should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 37 and 50 are apparatus claims that are parallel to claim 18, and claim 46 is an article of manufacture claim that is parallel to claim 18. The remarks made above in regard to claim 18 are generally applicable to claims 37, 46 and 50, which are submitted as patentable on the same basis as claim 18.

Claim 51 is directed to a "system for decentralized e-commerce" including "a first database for storing at least one portal tagging standard having portal tags" and "a second database for storing at least one registered content provider information, including key information and an address to content". The address includes "a network location address to content having provider tags identifying each of at least one content field within the content" and the key information includes "a cross-reference of portal tags corresponding to provider tags".

The system of claim 51 is further recited to include "a central processing unit configured" to perform the following functions: "receive a user search request having at least one search term associated with at least one portal tag", "cross-reference each portal tag with at least one corresponding provider tag using the key information" and "search the content by comparing each search term with each matching content field",

where a matching content field is "a content field tagged with a provider tag corresponding to the portal tag associated with the search term."

Once again applicants respectfully submit that the references relied upon by the Examiner, taken either alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest several features of claim 51. For example, there is nothing in those references regarding a database that stores at least one portal tagging standard having portal tags. The references also lack any disclosure in regard to a database which stores key information which includes a cross-reference of portal tags corresponding to provider tags. Further, the references fail to disclose a CPU configured to cross-reference each portal tag with at least one corresponding provider tag.

For all of these reasons, it is believed that the rejection of claim 51 should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Each pending claim which has not been referred to above is a dependent claim and is submitted as patentable on the same basis as its respective parent independent claim.

B. Rejection Under 35 USC §101

Claims 43-46 were also "rejected under 35 USC 101 as failing to provide a concrete, useful and tangible output". In response to this rejection, claims 43-46 have been rewritten so as to be in a format that has been held, pursuant to In re Beauregard, 35 U.S.P.Q.2d 1383 (CAFC 1995), to satisfy the requirements of §101. More specifically, each of claims 43-46 now recites "an article of manufacture" including "a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein". Claims in this format were specifically acknowledged by the USPTO as constituting patentable subject matter under 35 USC §101, as evidenced by the order entered in the above-cited Beauregard case. The Examiner is respectfully referred to this case and to the resulting U.S. Patent No. 5,710,578. It is accordingly submitted that the rejection under §101 has been overcome.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, all pending claims are patentable over the cited references, alone or in combination. Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. Applicants' silence with respect to other comments made in the Office Action (e.g., comments directed to various dependent claims) does not imply agreement with those comments.

If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of the present application, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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Encl.: Amended specification paragraphs and claims showing changes

AMENDED SPECIFICATION PARAGRAPHS SHOWING CHANGES RELATIVE TO PREVIOUS VERSIONS

The paragraph beginning at page 1, line 7 has been amended as follows:

The internet has grown explosively over the past decade, during which time the internet has evolved into a multinational forum for e-commerce, educational and informational exchange. With this explosive growth, the [shear] sheer volume of content available on the internet has made it difficult for content providers to make their content known and for users to find the content. While large businesses with large marketing programs and budgets can garner great attention and generate high traffic volumes to their sites through mass media advertising and the like, small content providers, such as individuals and small businesses, go all but unnoticed.

The paragraph beginning at page 5, line 11 has been amended as follows:

In accordance with one embodiment of the invention, there is provided a system and method for conducting field specific searches of decentralized, non-standardized content using key information. The [systems] system and method [provides] provide a portal server for receiving content search requests from users. The search requests contain search terms associated with portal tags. The associated portal tags define search criteria wherein the search for a term will be restricted to content fields corresponding to that [terms] term's associated portal tag. The content is stored on a plurality of remote content servers and is tagged by the provider using a tagging language such as XML to identify important content fields of information within the content. Each content provider may tag its content according to its own tagging scheme. The content providers in turn supply key information cross-referencing their tags to corresponding portal tags during a registration process. In this way, the portal server searches the content of each provider by comparing each search term associated with a portal tag to content identified by a corresponding provider tag.

AMENDED CLAIMS SHOWING CHANGES RELATIVE TO PREVIOUS VERSIONS

43. (Amended) An article of manufacture comprising:

a [A] computer [readable] usable medium having computer [executable software] readable program code [stored thereon the code] means embodied therein for decentralized e-commerce, comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to receive a search request from a user to search content stored on at least one content server, wherein the content includes provider tags identifying each of at least one content field within the content, and wherein the search request includes at least one search term associated with at least one portal tag, the portal tag being part of a portal tagging standard and identifying a type of data within content to be searched;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to identify the provider tag corresponding to the portal tag using a cross-reference of portal tags corresponding to provider tags; and

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to compare the search term with a content field tagged with a provider tag corresponding to the portal tag associated with the search term.

44. (Amended) An article of manufacture comprising:

a [A] computer [readable] usable medium having computer [executable software] readable program code [stored thereon, the code] means embodied therein for decentralized e-commerce, comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to generate an index of decentralized content having a record for each of at least one provider's content, wherein each record includes at least one data field identified by a portal tag, the data field containing at least a portion of content from a content field identified by a provider tag corresponding to the portal tag, the provider tag corresponding to the portal tag being identified using key information;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to receive a search request from a user to search the index, wherein the search request includes at least one search term associated with at least one portal tag; and

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to compare the search terms having associated portal tags with the portion of content stored in the data field identified by the same portal tag.

45. (Amended) An article of manufacture comprising:

a [A] computer [readable] usable medium having computer [executable software] readable program code [stored thereon, the code] means embodied therein for decentralized e-commerce, comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to register a content provider, comprising receiving key information and an address to content, the content being tagged with at least one provider tag to identify each of at least one content field, the content being stored on a content server and the key information being a cross-reference of each provider tag corresponding to each portal tag;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to provide a user search interface permitting a user to enter a search request for content, wherein the user search interface permits a user to associate a portal tag with each search term whereby restricting the search to at least one of the content fields;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to receive the search request from a user;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to search the content based on the search request;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to identify content complying with the user's search request; and

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to transmit the identified content to the user.

46. (Amended) An article of manufacture comprising:

a [A] computer [readable] usable medium having computer [executable software] readable program code [stored thereon, the code] means embodied therein for decentralized e-commerce, comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to create content wherein the content is tagged with at least one provider tag to identify each of at least one content field;

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to store the content on a content server; and

computer readable program code means for causing the computer to register the content with a portal server, comprising providing an address for the content and providing key information relating a provider tag to a corresponding portal tag in a portal tagging standard.

47. (Amended) A programmed computer for decentralized e-commerce, comprising:

a memory for storing computer executable code; and

a processor for executing the program code stored in memory, wherein the program code includes:

code to receive a search request from a user to search content stored on at least one content server, wherein the content includes provider tags identifying each of at least one content field within the content, and wherein the search request includes at least one search term associated with at least one portal tag, the portal tag being part of a portal tagging standard and identifying a type of data within content to be searched;

code to identify the provider tag corresponding to the portal tag using a cross-reference of portal tags corresponding to provider tags; and

code to compare the search term with a content field tagged with a provider tag corresponding to the portal tag associated with the search term.